

THE *Freeman*

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

DECEMBER 1958

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MEMO ON PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

No. 3 in a series

“Taxpaying private carriers will be spared from further government competition...”

In a June 1958 letter to the Senate Post Office subcommittee, the Chamber of Commerce of the United States outlined its reasons for urging Congress to reject proposals that would amend the present law (P.L. 199 of the 82nd Congress) by increasing parcel post size and weight limitations.

“P.L. 199 was brought about,” the Chamber asserted, “as a re-statement of policy by Congress, because *the original purpose of establishing parcel post had been distorted over the years by administrative action until the Post Office found itself in the freight business.*”

“Since enactment of the law,” the Chamber said, “substantial amounts of large package business have been returned to commercial carriers. This has benefited the nation’s economy. The busi-

ness should not now be turned back to the government.”

The Chamber pointed out that parcel post still is a subsidized government service, since part of its costs is hidden in the budgets of other agencies and is not charged against the Post Office Department. Moreover, postal facilities are not adequate now to provide all the service assigned to the department. *Any increase in the size and weight of packages permitted in the mails would increase the need for more government spending for better facilities.*

It is obvious, therefore, that to enact any legislation that would turn business back to unfair government competitive service, would, in effect, be turning *our* backs on the fundamental principles of the American economic system.

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On Turning Back the Clock

RALPH BRADFORD

A LETHAL SHIBBOLETH which collectivists of all kinds (conscious or unconscious) have employed to confound and confuse those who oppose them is this: "Surely you don't want to turn back the clock!"

Are you worried about the size of the federal debt and its effect upon solvency, prosperity, and freedom? But my friend, what would you do—turn back the clock?

Do you believe federal aid to education is wrong in principle and dangerous in practice? That makes you not only an enemy of education, but an irresponsible person who would nullify progress—by turning back the clock.

Are you apprehensive about the growth and influence of the federal bureaucracy, and the extent to which it can flout Congress and the people? But surely, as a believer in progress, you wouldn't want to turn back the clock!

Do you believe there is a threat to free government in the way many states have shirked their clear responsibilities and now look to the central government for doles? Then without doubt you are a setter back of clocks and a kind of menace yourself.

Do you now and then express some alarm over continued defi-

Mr. Bradford is a well-known writer and business organization consultant.

cit financing and consequent debt, devaluation, and inflation? But the clock, man, the clock — do you want to turn it back?

And so on and on, infinitely and to a sickness.

Now the tragic note in all this nonsense is that many real conservatives and true liberals (the terms, when properly used, are synonymous) have let themselves be victimized by the phrase. Indeed, they often use it themselves. I have heard men sigh despairingly over some current folly of squandered public funds, then shrug and say resignedly, "But I suppose we can't turn back the clock."

The Sacred Clock

But in the name of all things holy, what is so sacred about a clock? "The clock," said Walt Whitman, "indicates the moment" — and he added, "but what does eternity indicate?" — which may have been a poetic non sequitur, but not when you consider that it pretty definitely put the clock in its place.

A clock is just a moment-indicator. It is a mechanical contraption that doesn't even measure the time it indicates. It merely ticks it off in robot fashion, sometimes quite erroneously; and about its only claim to originality or distinction is that, being mechanical,

it will sooner or later differ from every other clock.

Recall, if you will, the experience of the Emperor Charles V. When he had abandoned the pomp of state for the quiet of his monastery, he liked to pass the time tinkering with clocks. There were two that became his special pets, but he soon discovered that they simply wouldn't keep the same time. He spent weeks trying to regulate them, but at last gave up in humorous despair — not, however, without the recompense of a bit of philosophy. "To think," he mused ruefully, "that I attempted to force the reason and conscience of thousands into one mold — and I can't even make two clocks agree!"

If the clock were human, and not a mere assembly of interlocking cogwheels and escapement ratchets activated by weights and springs, such refusal to conform would be admirable, even though it might be irritating to conformists. But in a clock it is only irritating, especially when it causes us to miss a train.

Of course, it is possible, and at times quite easy, to grow sentimental about a clock. I can still summon an unashamed tear when I hear the old song or read Henry Work's touching verses about the grandfather's clock that was so much too tall for the shelf that it

stood ninety years on the floor — ninety years without slumbering, his life seconds numbering, and stopping short, never to go again, when the old man died.

In Grandfather's Time

This is all the more real to me because it summons up a dream-like memory of my own flesh-and-blood grandfather and *his* clock. I can see it as a scene from my early boyhood. Like most grandfathers of that time, mine had a fine, flowing white beard and rather long white hair. He might have been a good stand-in for Father Time himself each night when, the last thing before he went to bed, he crossed to one side of the big living room to wind the clock.

It, too, stood on the floor, being too tall for any shelf in the house. It, too, was a grandfather's clock, both literally and by popular designation. It, too, was "taller by half than the old man himself," but as to whether it weighed not a pennyweight more, I cannot testify. What I can testify is that it ran by weights — two metallic cylinders or cannisters that were filled with scraps of iron and suspended from chains which ran over activating sprockets in the mechanism above. In the course of 24 hours these weights gradually descended; each night they had to be pulled back up to top posi-

tion. This was accomplished simply by lifting the weight with one hand and pulling down on the dangling end of the chain with the other.

The clock was a lovely old time-piece, and I think my grandfather had a secret fondness for it. Once I saw him pat it much as he might have patted one of the horses. But it used to try his patience and test his fondness by being perverse and erratic in its performance. Erratic, that is, about the amount, but never about the fact, of its deviations. It was always fast! Some days it gained more than others — but it always gained.

Grandfather, who was a pretty good mechanic, had formerly tinkered with it considerably. He fiddled with the weights that ran it, slid the pendulum balance up and down, adjusted the escapement, and did various things to its more intimate innards. But it was all to no avail.

Grandfather, in fact, had the Emperor Charles V one up. The retired monarch couldn't control two clocks; grandfather couldn't control one!

So at last he quit trying. He was licked, and knew it. Each night he went patiently through the routine of "winding it up" — that is, of raising the weights. Each night he thereupon glanced at the big, thick, turnip-size, key-wind watch

he carried. And each night he uttered the ejaculation that had become as much a bedtime formula with him as his nightly prayer.

"Huh! By Jing — she's fast again!"

And then — hold your breath, my brethren; put on the storm windows; batten the hatches; prepare for disaster piled upon sacrilege. Because . . .

Then he turned back the clock!

He turned it back in other ways, too — I mean in the terms of today's metaphorical cliché. That is to say, he didn't hesitate to back away from some preconceived plan, or to give up some anticipated luxury or convenience, if it didn't seem wise or feasible in view of new and unexpected conditions. .

They Lived within Their Means

I remember once he and my grandmother had planned some improvements around the house and in his farm equipment. A new base burner was to replace the well-worn space-heater stove in the big living room, and a resplendent new reaper was to shine in place of the outworn and outmoded old one. The plans were all made, the money set aside — and then disaster struck. A flash flood washed out the small bridge into the back pasture, a hail storm half ruined the wheat crop, and the price of

hogs went down. It was going to be a very tight year financially.

So what did they do? I don't recall that there was any moaning about their hard fate. There was no declaiming about what society owed them as producers of food and fiber. And if anybody had suggested to them that some branch of government at Washington or the state capital ought to give them a handout, they would have been both amazed and indignant.

What did they do? Why — they turned back the clock! They said they would make the old stove and the old reaper do for another year. They didn't particularly *want* to do this, mind you; they wanted the comfort and cleanness of the new stove and the saved labor made possible by the new reaper. They desired also the pride of ownership that would come of possessing such modern improvements. But they were not willing to spend beyond their resources.

I do not mean that they were governed by primitive concepts of economy. They understood the usages of deficit financing, although I doubt if either of them had ever heard the phrase. But they were perfectly willing, on occasion, to "go into debt" when it was clearly in their interest to do so — as when they had an opportunity to purchase an adjoining

forty acres at an attractive price, and did so, giving back a mortgage for the unpaid balance and paying it off out of what they earned from the added acres. That was good business. But they were not willing to "go into debt" merely to gratify their desire for the luxury and convenience of the new farm and household equipment. They said they would wait a while. They said they would "make do." Not being aware of the awful social and semantic consequences of their action, they simply and as a matter of course "turned back the clock."

A Trip Postponed

Another year they had planned a trip out into Illinois to visit relatives they had not seen for years. Such travel was not frequent in those days. The trip would have been an experience for them both. It would have set them apart in the neighborhood. They would have been travelers with a capital T. They would have had something to talk about for a long time.

But that turned out to be the year of the big drought. There was almost a complete crop failure, and grandfather's income was reduced to practically nothing. Of course, they had some money in the bank — but that was to meet a mortgage payment on the Hill

Field. They also had a substantial savings account — but that was a hedge against sickness. They were all set for the trip; and they could have gone. But it wouldn't have been prudent, so they called it off. Poor, benighted, underprivileged people that they were, they didn't know any better than to turn back the clock.

And incidentally, let it be recorded that a few years later they did make the trip to Illinois. They did get the new stove, and grandfather didn't merely get a new reaper; he got the latest thing in harvesting machinery — a combination reaper and binder. They paid for over 300 acres of good farm land, raised a numerous family, had a good comfortable home, and were never in want. There were no price supports, no soil bank, no crop insurance — yet grandfather made the place pay. There was no "social security," no old-age pensions from the government; yet when they were old, they were well taken care of — and not by the charity of their children, either, but by the provision which they themselves had made against that time of life.

They worked, they saved, they traveled some, they enjoyed the good things which the life of their day offered them; they were substantial people and good citizens. But they would be a disturbing

pair of serpents in today's economic paradise; and I have no doubt they would periodically scandalize all true progressives by unceremoniously turning back the clock.

The moral of this piece, if it has one, is that there is nothing sacred about the clock, neither as a timepiece nor as a semantic symbol. To be modern, to be up-to-date, to be three jumps ahead of the Joneses—this is not always to be either wise or successful. This is as true of governments as it is of persons. Sometimes the part of wisdom for men and nations is to slow down, to wait awhile, to let things unfold—and yes, even to turn back the clock.

A Road-Building Project

Twenty odd years ago my wife and I bought an old house and a few acres of land in northern Virginia, just fourteen miles from downtown Washington. In spite of its proximity to the Capital, it was still rural countryside.

A small railroad of the old interurban type, which ran from Washington to the Great Falls of the Potomac just beyond our place, had lately gone bankrupt and discontinued service. For those who had built or purchased homes along its right of way, the only access to Washington was a drive of two miles over muddy side

roads to the nearest paved highway. When the spring thaws came, they were stuck in the mud.

Virginia had recently adopted what was known as the Byrd Law, which said in effect that in building roads the state would proceed on a pay-as-you-go basis. Whenever sufficient funds were collected from the state gasoline tax, roads would be built. When there was no money—no roads. And there were to be no local road districts, no local bond issues. That was all well and good, but we and our neighbors were stuck in the mud. However, we did not feel that we were due any special consideration. After all, nobody had forced us to buy property in that area.

But we did have a problem, so we organized a group of citizens to see what could be done. We conferred with state road officials. The district engineer explained his problem, which was simple. He had a certain sum of money that year; it would build so many miles of road; the highway commission had decided it was more important to the general public to close up certain gaps in the main highways than to build our side road. This was tough on us, but it was logical. It made sense, and we accepted it. We wanted and needed a hard surface side road; we wanted it then—that year. But

we turned back the clock. We waited.

Next year the engineer told us that by squeezing and pinching he had managed to get together enough money to build a base for our road but that he simply couldn't stretch it far enough to top the base with the usual tar and chip preparation. How much was he shy? He told us the amount. If we got the money for the topping, would he build the road? He would. So my neighbor and I went from house to house, collecting fifty dollars here, twenty-five there, and ten yonder. And thus we got our road.

Of course, this was all wrong by big spending standards. The state should have voted X hundreds of millions of dollars in bonds and built thousands of miles of highway, right away, quick. That's the modern and "progressive" way. Human needs must be met, now — and anybody who worries about the cost is a shortsighted reactionary who cares more for dollars than he does for human values!

Promises, Promises, Promises

But we got our road. We turned back the clock — and I, for one, have never been sorry. And now for the belated sequel, which might be captioned "Twenty Years After."

The other day I attended a

"coffee" to meet a candidate for Congress. He was a very personable man — one who will have a lot of popular appeal. The man who introduced me to the candidate happened to have worked with me those twenty years ago in getting our road; and he mentioned our experiences of that time.

The candidate's comment was to the effect that such methods may have been all right for those days (those days! He talked as though it were at least as far back as the Civil War!) but that we had to move faster now. Human welfare and convenience demanded that progressive people move in and get things done quickly. And more to the same effect.

Both in speaking semiprivately with me and later in his informal talk to the assembled group, he called for this, that, and the other "improvement" that simply *must* be achieved without delay — all to cost very great sums of money; and not once did he even mention the federal debt or suggest any plan or purpose to reduce the cost and size of government.

The group that met with him — perhaps twenty-five or thirty people — were all householders, taxpayers, presumably responsible citizens. Moreover, they were all people of education and experience — and I don't believe there is the

slightest doubt that the big-spending candidate will get all their votes. They are not going to turn back the clock!

It may be ticking off further inroads into their earnings; its chimes may be a knell to their savings; its hands may be pointing derisively to the farce of their so-called social security — no matter. It is The Clock, and it must not be turned back.

How Late the Hour

How long, O Lord, how long will we be muzzled, roped, and hog-tied by clichés that have no meaning? How long will we regard the political, social, and economic antics of self-anointed supermen

as sacrosanct, simply because they are performed *now*? Are the experiments of today worth so much more than the experience of yesterday? How long shall we look upon every warning and counsel from the past as ancient and outmoded?

Well might our national clock be turned back somewhat — back to solvency, to money that keeps its value, to productivity, to pride of craft, to independence of spirit, to public and private integrity. To the extent that our clock has moved us away from those things it is a false clock, running at random, keeping no true time, and deceiving us tragically as to the hour that is striking. • • •

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

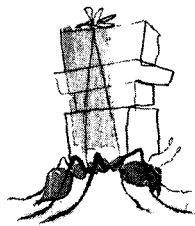
Progress through Individuals

ALL THE PROGRESS we have made since the appearance of intelligent mankind in this world has been associated with the accomplishment of the individual. Furthermore, there is no reason to think that anything now taking place will change this.

The late Henry Grady Weaver explained this very lucidly in his little book, *The Mainspring of Human Progress*. His point is, simply, that human energy is controlled and exercised by the individual mind and the individual human being. Every single element of progress and invention that mankind has enjoyed has arrived in this world through the mind of some one person. The total of the progress that we have enjoyed is the integration of the contributions of the individuals. And in spite of the powerful organizations and teams which we possess today in industry, government, the military, research, and development, progress continues to arrive in individual quanta, through individuals. There is no other path for it.



Liberal or Conservative?



Some common-sense reflections on a knotty problem.

SAMUEL B. PETTENGILL

AN IMMENSE AMOUNT of nonsense has been poured out over the word "liberal." Like a flock of timid sheep we have been stampeded by it. Nearly every candidate for public office has shouted his liberalism and beaten his breast that he was more "liberal" than his opponent. Thoughtless radicals have smeared into silence everyone who asked why and when and what it was to be "liberal." "Tory" and "reactionary" have filled the air. Because we have been cowards, we have let the conservative side go by default.

"There is a time to sow and a time to reap." Every farmer is a liberal in the spring when he plows a fresh field, tries a new seed, experiments with a new fertilizer. In the fall he is a conservative. He conserves the fruit of his toil. He harvests his crops and stores them

in the barn where they will not mildew nor rot.

Every youth seeking his first job is a liberal. When he gets his first pay, he is a conservative if he is worth his salt. Andrew Carnegie thought it was the supreme moment of his boyhood when he ran home to his mother with shining eyes, holding the few dimes he had received for a week of twelve-hour days.

When Old Dog Tray goes sniffing through the brush for rabbits, he is a liberal; when he buries a bone, he is a conservative.

"Go to the ant, O thou sluggard, consider his ways and be wise." The ant is a conservative. The grasshopper who lays up nothing for cold wet days is a "liberal." He is like those who expect the government to take care of them.

The beehive is the symbol of conservatism. Provision for winter days. A shelter against the storm.

Mr. Pettengill, noted attorney and author, was formerly a congressman from Indiana.

The home is the heart of conservatism. A savings account, a life insurance policy, a share of stock, a roof over one's head; what are these but things to be conserved?

We have fought our wars as conservatives. We wanted to conserve our freedom, the American way of life, the integrity of our frontiers, the soil we call home. Every soldier and sailor is a conservative.

Workingmen struggling to improve their conditions are liberals. When they fight to keep their gains, they are conservatives. What is the use of being a liberal unless you are equally brave to conserve whatever good liberalism has won?

Nation Founded on Both

The Declaration of Independence was a liberal document; the Constitution of the United States a conservative one. It was to "insure" domestic tranquillity, and "secure" the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.

The roots and trunk of a tree are conservative. They stand against the tempest. The branches, twigs, and leaves are liberals. One represents stability and power, the other freedom and movement; one, strength, the other, growth. It is a divine harmony. It proves that the true liberal must also be con-

servative; the genuine conservative, a liberal. Without the giant trunk the tree would fall; without the leaves it would die. Each is necessary to the other. Why should the leaves curse the trunk that holds them to the sun; why should the trunk condemn the leaves which keep the sap flowing up from the wellsprings of life?

In time the lower branches die. The husbandman (or statesman) prunes them off. He is a liberal in cutting them; a conservative in taking the fagots home to warm his hearth.

St. Paul did not say, "Hold fast to everything." But he did say, "Hold fast to that which *is* good." Why not?

The attic is a conservative institution. In it we store grandma's old spinning wheel, grandpa's musket, or the "little toy soldiers" with which our soldier son once played.

Something important to our life happened when men and women began to live in houses without attics, in apartments and trailers where they could store nothing that tied them to the past.

Lloyd George once said, "Men will not fight for a boarding house." He was right. We should be "liberal" in making sure that all men and women will be able to *earn* and own that conservative thing called home.

New Year's Day is liberal. Resolutions are made, dreams are dreamed, and hopes flourish. Christmas Day is conservative. It conserves the love of parents; the bond between husband and wife; the laughter of children; charity for the poor; and remembrance of

the Master and his mercy toward all mankind.

Why be tyrannized by a word? Let us be as liberal as seeds in the springtime; as conservative as the laws which hold the great stars in the sky or the stars in Old Glory. • • •

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

An American Creed . . .

I DO NOT CHOOSE to be a common man. It is my right to be uncommon if I can. I seek opportunity — not security. I do not wish to be a kept citizen, humbled, dulled, by having the State look after me. I want to take the calculated risk; to dream and to build; to fail or succeed. I refuse to barter incentive for a dole. I prefer the challenges of life to the guaranteed existence; the thrill of fulfillment to the state calm of utopia.

I will not trade freedom for beneficence, nor my dignity for a handout. I will never cower before any master nor bend to any threat. It is my heritage to stand erect, proud, and unafraid; to think and act for myself; enjoy the benefits of my creation, and to face the world boldly and say: . . . This I have done!

ANONYMOUS



Bettmann Archive

ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE (1805-1859)

After a painting by Chasseriau

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THE PROPHET,

de Tocqueville

Well over a century ago he foresaw the potentialities, including some dangerous implications, of democracy in America.

WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN

ONE OF THE SUREST TESTS of a great book is durability. A commentary on the life and institutions and national character of America in the time of Andrew Jackson that still remains fresh and vivid and lifelike marks the author as an observer and writer of rare talent. It is never an easy task to sift the wheat from the chaff, the important from the trivial, the permanent from the transient in a manner calculated to satisfy the judgment of posterity.

But when a foreign observer in the United States a century and a quarter ago not only presents a singularly discerning analysis of the early American Republic, with its virtues and faults, its strength and weakness, but also writes with

almost uncanny prescience of many social and political developments that became clear only in the twentieth century, long after he was dead, he deserves to be regarded as something more than a gifted observer. He deserves the title of prophet, and his book is one of the absolutely indispensable classics in the field of political science.

The man in question is Alexis de Tocqueville; the book is *Democracy in America*, de Tocqueville's record of the impressions which he gained from a tour of America in the early eighteen thirties. His primary concern in America was to study the working of what was then considered to be a new and revolutionary conception of government "of the people, by the people, for the people," without a monarchy, an hereditary aristocracy, an established church. De Tocqueville approached this study

Mr. Chamberlin is the author of numerous books, a lecturer, and a contributor to the *Wall Street Journal* and many nationally known magazines.

with admirable open-mindedness and freedom from doctrinaire prejudice. As a young man he forecast his own career in these words:

"I do not know any way of life more honorable or more attractive than to write with such honesty about the great truths that one's name becomes known to the civilized world."

He lived up so well to this ideal in his writing that his *Democracy in America*, along with his other works, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* and his observations in England and Ireland, remain as an impressive monument to his memory. He was entirely without the superciliousness of some European visitors who could see nothing in America but rough frontier manners, such as the common habit of spitting tobacco juice in all directions.

Self-Government Commended

De Tocqueville was discerning and generous in recognizing the positive benefits that flowed from the scheme of government devised by the Founding Fathers: the respect for law because of the prevalence of self-government, the absence of arrogant display by officialdom, the immensely productive energy that comes from individual self-reliance, the absence of the burdens of militarism. This

mirror of the past America may be in some respects an unconscious criticism of the America of 1958, with its vast bureaucracy, heavy taxation, increasing arrogation of power by the federal authority, and growing remoteness of the governing process from the people.

"The European," writes this French observer, "generally submits to a public officer because he represents a superior force, but to an American he represents a right. In America it may be said that no one renders obedience to man, but to justice and law."

Reliance on one's individual exertion, a reproach in the eyes of many who look on themselves as advanced social thinkers in our time, is the object of de Tocqueville's repeated praise:

"The citizen of the United States is taught from his earliest infancy to rely upon his own exertions in order to resist the evils and the difficulties of life; he looks upon social authority with an eye of mistrust and anxiety, and he only claims its assistance when he is quite unable to shift without it. . . . When a private individual meditates an undertaking, however directly connected it may be with the welfare of society, he never thinks of soliciting the co-operation of the government, but he publishes his plan, offers to execute it himself, courts the as-

sistance of other individuals, and struggles manfully against all obstacles. Undoubtedly he is often less successful than the State might have been in his position; but in the end *the sum of these private undertakings far exceeds all that the government could have done.*" (italics supplied)

De Tocqueville notes that America had come much closer than Europe in giving its people a sense of conservatism in the most effective way: by creating conditions where they had something to conserve. So he tells of meeting a fellow Frenchman, who had been "a great leveler and an ardent demagogue forty years ago," who had then emigrated to the United States and prospered as a planter. De Tocqueville, in view of his host's background was somewhat surprised to hear him "discuss the rights of property as an economist or landowner might have done; he spoke of the necessary gradations which fortune establishes among men."

This countryman of de Tocqueville is certainly not the only European radical whose views were changed by the influence of individual opportunity in the United States. De Tocqueville draws this interesting general conclusion:

"In America those complaints against property in general which are so frequent in Europe are

never heard, because in America there are no paupers; and as everyone has property of his own to defend, everyone recognizes the principle upon which he holds it."

De Tocqueville was quick to recognize the advantages which accrued to America from its isolated geographical position and from its adherence to Washington's wise injunction to shun participation in the quarrels of Europe. In one of his most prescient passages he writes:

"The Americans have no neighbors, and consequently they have no great wars, or financial crises, or inroads, or conquest to dread; they require neither great taxes, nor great armies, nor great generals; and they have nothing to fear from a scourge which is more formidable to republics than all these evils combined, namely military glory. . . . The Union is as happy and free as a small people, and as glorious and strong as a great nation."

Three Serious Defects

Democracy in America is not an unqualified eulogy. He notes three serious defects: conformity, mediocrity, materialism.

"It seems, at first sight, as if all the minds of the Americans were formed upon one model, so accurately do they correspond in their manner of judging.

"In few civilized nations of our time have great artists, fine poets, or celebrated writers been more rare than in the United States . . . If the observer only singles out the learned, he will be astonished to find how rare they are; but if he counts the ignorant, the American people will appear to be the most enlightened community in the world. The whole population is situated between these two extremes. . . . The spirit of gain is always on the stretch, and the human mind, constantly diverted from the pleasures of imagination and the labors of the intellect, is there swayed by no impulse but the pursuit of wealth."

And one of the unmistakable purple passages of the book gives this picture of the American who is never content with what he has, who is constantly on the move for new opportunities:

"In the United States a man builds a house to spend his later years in it, and he sells it before the roof is on. He plants a garden, and lets it just as the trees begin to bear. He brings a field into tillage and leaves other men to gather the crops. He embraces a profession and gives it up. He settles in a place, which he soon leaves, to carry his changeable longings elsewhere . . . Death at last overtakes him, but it is before he is weary of his bootless chase

of that complete felicity which is always on the wing."

De Tocqueville finds a democracy likely to be incompetent in the conduct of foreign affairs; perhaps many present-day Americans would agree with him. His observation on this point is as follows:

"Foreign politics demand scarcely any of those qualities which a democracy possesses; and they require, on the contrary, the perfect use of almost all those faculties in which it is deficient. . . . A democracy is unable to regulate the details of an important undertaking, to persevere in a design, and to work out its execution in the presence of serious obstacles. It cannot combine its measures with secrecy, and it will not await their consequences with patience."

The Past Mirrors the Present

In almost all his observations on the American past de Tocqueville shows himself a shrewd, perceptive observer and his impressions furnish a mirror in which Americans today may view their country and themselves. One fears that in the matter of individual self-reliance and distrust of government aid there has been a considerable falling off. And the former safety of geographical isolation has been seriously undermined by unwise policies and also by the impersonal

march of science, which has automatically reduced very much the security which America enjoyed when it could only be approached by a boat, when airplanes and ballistic missiles were scarcely dreamed of.

But the French political scientist displays remarkable capacity not only to observe the present, but to divine the future. He visited an America that had no national debt, to speak of, no military establishment of any consequence, no welfare-state institutions, and no income tax. But he foresaw the danger that under democracy there might be a trend for the relatively poor majority to employ universal suffrage as a means of siphoning into their own pockets more and more of the income and property of the well-to-do minority. He forecast this probability almost as clearly as if he had before him a 1958 income-tax blank:

"Wherever the poor direct public affairs and dispose of the natural resources, it appears certain that, as they profit by the expenditure of the State, they are apt to augment that expenditure.

"I conclude, therefore, that the democratic government of the Americans is not a cheap government, as is sometimes asserted; and I have no hesitation in predicting that, if the people of the

United States is ever involved in serious difficulties, its taxation will speedily be increased to the rate of that which prevails in the great part of the aristocracies and monarchies of Europe."

U.S. and U.S.S.R.

The most remarkable demonstration of the author's prophetic gift is in regard to the twentieth century predominance, in world affairs, of the United States and Russia. At the time when *Democracy in America* was written, Russia was only one of several European great powers and the United States counted for very little in European power calculations. Yet de Tocqueville confidently offered this preview of a situation that actually came to pass more than a century later:

"There are at the present time two great nations in the world which seem to tend toward the same end, although they started from different points. I allude to the Russians and the Americans. . . . All other nations seem to have nearly reached their natural limits; but these are still in the act of growth. All the others are stopped, or continue to advance with extreme difficulty; these are proceeding with ease and celerity along a path to which the human eye can assign no term. . . .

"The Anglo-American relies

upon personal interest to accomplish his ends, and gives free scope to the unguided exertions and common sense of the citizens. The Russian centers all the authority of society in a single arm. The principal instrument of the former is freedom; of the latter, servitude. Their starting points are different and their courses are not the same; yet each of them seems to be marked out by the will of Heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe."

Democratic Weakness

Despite his own aristocratic origin, de Tocqueville was clear-sighted enough to recognize that the Old Regime in France, and in Europe, was finished. He was also prescient enough to anticipate that democracy, without checks and balances, could degenerate into an absolutism more appalling than the old-fashioned monarchy. One finds in his work remarkable premonitions of communism and of fascism, of ruthless tyranny exercised in the name of a cowed, drugged, propagandized majority. Some of his writing on this subject has a very real and eloquent message for our time; de Tocqueville, who defies precise classification as a conservative or a liberal, can more accurately be described as a libertarian individualist:

"Unlimited power is in itself a

bad and dangerous thing; human beings are not competent to exercise it with discretion, and God alone can be omnipotent, because his wisdom and justice are always equal to his power. But no power upon earth is so worthy of honor for itself, or of reverential obedience to the rights which it represents, that I would consent to admit its uncontrolled and all-predominant authority.

"In my opinion the main evil of the present democratic institutions of the United States does not arise, as is often asserted in Europe, from their weakness, but from their overpowering strength; and I am not so much alarmed at the excessive liberty which reigns in that country as at the very inadequate securities which exist against tyranny."

He then asks to whom an individual, if wronged in the United States, can apply for redress, when public opinion, the legislature, the executive are all subject to the will of the majority, and even the judges in some states are elected by the majority. What he is seeking is some means of forestalling or at least mitigating the possible tyranny of the majority.

Totalitarianism Foreseen

There is a vision of fascism and communism, with their massacres and proscriptions, in his only too

well justified prediction that, should absolute power be re-established in Europe, "it would assume a new form and appear under features unknown to our forefathers." Formerly, religion, sense of honor, family pride, provincial prejudices, custom, and public opinion limited the power of kings and placed a restraint on their authority. Now these restraining influences are weakened or destroyed and he fears a return to "those hideous eras of Roman oppression when the manners of the people were corrupted, their traditions obliterated, their habits destroyed, their opinions shaken, and freedom, expelled from the laws, could find no refuge in the land."

In other words, the unlimited tyranny of a Stalin or a Hitler.

The Bureaucratic Burden

Perhaps the finest performance of de Tocqueville as prophet is this superb vision of the ultimate logical result of the Welfare State:

"Above this race of men stands an immense and tutelary power, which takes upon itself alone to secure their gratifications and to watch over their fate. That power is absolute, minute, regular, provident, and mild. It would be like the authority of a parent if, like that authority, its object was to prepare men for manhood. But

it seeks, on the contrary, to keep them in perpetual childhood. It is well content that the people should rejoice, provided they think of nothing but rejoicing. For their happiness such a government willingly labors. But it chooses to be the sole agent and only arbiter of that happiness. It provides for their security, foresees and supplies their necessities, manages their principal concerns, directs their industry, regulates the descent of property, and subdivides their inheritances — what remains, *but to spare them all the care of thinking and all the trouble of living . . . ?*

"The will of men is not shattered, but softened, bent, and guided. Men are seldom forced by it to act, but they are constantly restrained from acting. Such a power does not destroy, but it prevents existence. It does not tyrannize, but it compresses, enervates, extinguishes, and stupefies a people, *until each nation is reduced to be nothing better than a flock of timid and industrious animals, of which the government is the shepherd.*" (italics supplied)

Here is Alexis de Tocqueville at his best, the searching and brilliant observer of his own century and the inspired prophet of many of the problems, perils, and pitfalls of the still unborn twentieth century.

• • •

ANN TERRILL



Educational Trends

"IF PRESENT TRENDS continue, nearly 7,000,000 students will be enrolled in nonpublic elementary and secondary schools in the United States by 1965."

This statement issued recently by the United States Office of Education poses an interesting question: Are we headed back to a system of privately owned and financed education in this country?

The system of tax-supported schools is popularly accepted as "the American way" of providing schooling for many children who otherwise "couldn't afford to have an education of any kind." The declining rate of illiteracy is credited to this system. The Little Red Schoolhouse is hailed as the bastion and bulwark of American ideals.

But paradoxically, since 1940, private school enrollment has increased 86 per cent, or four times as fast as the 22 per cent added enrollment in tax-supported schools.

Although the U.S. Office of Education, the National Education Association, and other supporters of public education lay these startling figures to "social and economic causes," they fail to enlarge upon this. Could one of these causes be a deeply significant one, the statistics being, like the first robin, a mere harbinger of more to come? Are the American people, in other words, fighting in the only effective way left to them for the preservation of traditional American educational standards?

In states where church property is tax exempt, parochial schools have blossomed at an awe-inspiring rate, giving rise to the easy opinion that the tax exempt situation is responsible for the schools. This may be partly true. However, the same pattern prevails in states which do not offer this impetus to sectarian education.

Although many of these schools operate on slim margins, with limited facilities, the demand for

their services is intense. And the attendance at sectarian schools often includes a high proportion of children from families who are not members of that church. Significantly, in some areas well-endowed with public school plants operating on full day sessions, the demand for private and parochial school instruction is so strong that a waiting period of from six months to a year is common.

In these halcyon days of "social adjustment" it behooves the exponents of government-financed education and the people who pay for it, as well as their political leaders, to ask why the apparent rush away from the "inviting" classroom. It certainly isn't cheaper that way.

An article in a church publication last year had this to say on the subject:

"Actually, the most serious threat to public schools today is not the private or parochial school, but its own double failure in education and religion. Parents are disturbed about why Johnny can't read or write or do almost anything that used to be regarded as schooling."

That appears to be the crux of the matter. But the instilling of worthy goals and values deserves more mention. Many parents are prepared to make financial sacrifices, if necessary, to obtain them.

As Professor Patrick M. Boorman states in the August issue of *THE FREEMAN*: "It is time we learned afresh the truth that if liberty, justice, and human dignity are to survive in the world or even in this country, they cannot be ignored — either outside the classroom or in it."

Gardens of the Mind

Children's minds are receptive fields in which weeds are sure to grow if worth-while ideas haven't been planted first. And the weeds of socialism now choking this once free land must be associated in large measure with the tax-supported schooling that has prevailed, with its emphasis on conformity, and neglect of the disciplines and values basic to the development of the independent mind.

For years Russia tried our "permissive" approach to child-raising, with disastrous results. The nation was shaken by the spectacle of wholesale looseness of morals as the family unit disintegrated and children "freely expressed" themselves. Juvenile tragedy ran rampant as it always does in such situations. But the communists learned a valuable lesson. They re-instated the laudable practice of self-discipline in their own country, with world-astounding results. However, to soften up

a victim country, they always unleash moral turpitude in alluring and wholesale lots, well in advance of their conquering troops. For they remember well the havoc wrought at home, and recognize immorality for the double-edged sword that it is.

The moral and spiritual vacuum that such license creates is a wonderful wastebasket for depravity and spinelessness and is fertile soil indeed for the enslavement of peoples. This is nothing new, however. If one recalls the *Adventures of Pinocchio*, the puppet got there first. Collodi has Pinocchio run away to the land of pleasure where he may do as he pleases with no strings or responsibility attached. After indulging himself thoroughly, he is turned into a donkey and sold down the river. Collodi must have been an astute observer of human nature.

Morality Can Be Taught

There is no sound reason to assume that the same permissiveness given free rein in this country, both in and out of school, is not having the same bad effects. Good morals are not a matter of ingrained nationality. They are a way of life and are teachable. In too many instances they are not being taught.

The way to control a nation is through its children, for they are

the coming leaders. At a time when education and understanding are so essential, as satellites and insults rocket around the world, our public schools commendably are turning back to the study of mathematics and science. But the previously mentioned enrollment figures suggest the growing concern of parents for not only the sciences but also other American essentials as well. If their children are to face the rugged tomorrows with any degree of self-confidence, they must learn how and why to resist the paternalistic lures of a benevolent government. That famed American virtue of self-reliance has become lost in the shuffle of conformity, togetherness, "group motivational activities," and the like. Thoughtful parents may be wondering if the idea, prevalent in educationist circles, that competition undermines self-confidence, can longer be afforded. For, today we need all the self-reliant individualists that we can get. And whatever else he may be, an individualist nearly always has the self-confidence to stand alone, if necessary, in thought and deed.

With the crushing burden of taxes which most property owners pay, it is often with a distinct sense of sacrifice that many of them finance a private education for their children, in addition to

paying for the government schools they won't use. Obviously, the private schools are gaining, even against such grossly unfair competition.

Hopeful Signs

On several fronts the situation is far from static. This past year has seen the possible beginning of a trend. In California alone, there was the matter of the "safe" school bond issues which unaccountably failed to meet with the voters' approval while at the same time, for instance, one of California's more expensive private

schools enjoyed a long waiting list of hopeful enrollees. The reason?

"Small classes, individual attention. High scholastic standards. Credential teachers. Emphasis on good study habits, discipline, and character building," runs its advertisement.

Obviously those people recognize quality and are willing to pay for it. And in the minds of such thoughtful persons, there must be growing doubts as to the propriety of paying for a governmental "service" for which they have such little regard as to reject it though it's "free." • • •

THE *Rebel* FARMER

In Britain, as in the United States, thoughtful farmers show signs of having had their fill of subsidies and controls.

GEORGE WINDER

MR. JACK MERRICKS, a substantial farm operator from Sussex, is undoubtedly the outstanding personality among Britons who believe that the farmer's livelihood and freedom, as well as his man-

agement of his own property, is slowly being destroyed by state control.

One of Jack Merricks' immediate aims is to destroy the power of Marketing Board private "Courts" to inflict fines upon producers. He believes that such "Executive Courts" are incompatible with British legal traditions, a be-

Mr. Winder is a British farmer, author, and lecturer. His article first appeared in the September-October 1958 issue of the journal, *Freedom*, London.

lief he shares with most writers on the British Constitution, including the great Dicey himself, and with the Frenchman, de Tocqueville, who once congratulated us on our freedom from such irregular institutions.

The methods Jack Merricks uses to bring a knowledge of these evils to the public notice are more subtle than some people suppose. This becomes clearer when we read of his latest exploit at a sitting of the disciplinary Committee of the Tomato Marketing Board. His object in appearing before this body was to draw public attention to the fact that — today, in England — a man can be heavily fined, up to £200 in fact, by a “Court” which is both prosecutor and judge in its own case, and the recipient of the fines it inflicts, and which, furthermore, ignores all those rules of procedure and evidence which, over the generations, have been evolved to ensure an accused person a fair trial.

Although it may be difficult to expose all these anomalies of a tribunal in one sitting, Jack Merricks on this occasion certainly went a long way toward doing so.

Charged with failing to send in returns for the tomatoes he had grown, he opened his defense by blandly asking the chairman of

the tribunal, Mr. A. L. Cripps, Queen’s Counsel, how much the Board was paying him. He went on to explain that he only wanted this information because the law required the chairman to be an independent person, and as the Board — which was one party to the case — was paying him a fee, it was, of course, necessary for him, Jack Merricks, as the other party, to pay him an equal amount. He then produced his checkbook and, with an air of complete innocence, awaited the court’s reply.

This tall, heavily-built farmer has a slow, friendly, country drawl when he speaks in public, and a manner that is completely disarming. It certainly seems to have disarmed the chairman who, until then, probably did not know the formidable powers of the man he was up against.

The Judge Was Embarrassed

One can only imagine Mr. Cripps’ feelings. Here was a barrister, brought up in the best traditions of British law — traditions which all sound lawyers respect — and here was this quiet-mannered countryman, with his slow, impressive speech, reminding him of their obvious implications.

A lesser man than Mr. Cripps might have banged his chairman’s gavel and called for silence, but

although this might have suppressed this unusual countryman it could not silence the still small voice of a thousand years of legal tradition which now spoke in the chairman's well-trained legal mind unheard by his watching audience.

He knew that there could be no more invidious position for a barrister, brought up under the traditions of British law, than to sit in judgment between two parties when he is paid by one of them, and when a decision adverse to the Board might even deprive him of further tribunal appointments. Furthermore, although he was not the only judge in this strange "Court," those who sat alongside him were members of the Board itself, hardly likely to deal impartially with a rebel.

He did the only thing that a barrister and a gentleman could do in the circumstances. He announced that he would accept payment from neither party.

When he had done this, however, he had done all that Jack Merricks wanted. He had announced to the whole world – and nearly every newspaper in England reported it – that his position was an untenable one, and so, by implication, all such tribunals were contrary to the high stand-

ards of British justice. Coming from the very chairman of such a tribunal, no pronouncement could have been more effective.

He had created a precedent that makes it extremely difficult in the future for any barrister with a high regard for his profession to sit on a Marketing Board tribunal and accept a fee. How, in fact, after this, can any Marketing Board which seeks to punish a producer in the future, claim that it is able to give him a fair trial?

This being so, the government – sooner or later – will be compelled, if it has any regard for British justice, to so amend the Agricultural Marketing Act that any producer charged with an offense shall be brought before one of our established courts of law.

When that time comes, Marketing Board Tribunals will be remembered only as one of the evil fruits of that temporary aberration of politicians caused by their slow release from the war-time psychosis. They will be relegated to history alongside the Star Chamber and the Court of High Commission.

Truly, as Emerson once wrote: "All history is a record of the power of minorities, even of minorities of one." • • •

Leave it to JUNIOR

PAUL L. POIROT



"INSTEAD OF PAYING the teacher, she ought to pay us for the work she makes us do," reasoned the third-grader in protest at the resumption of school after summer vacation. "We do all the work, but the teacher is the one who gets paid. What's fair about that?"

"Well, son," you begin, "you have to produce something someone else wants before he'll pay you for your time."

"That's not true," comes the rebuttal. "Johnny Smith's Dad gets paid for being unemployed. He hasn't been to the plant all summer, but somebody pays him for his time."

"That's different," you venture. "His unemployment compensation comes from taxes the government has collected, and. . ."

"And what about Grandpa?" He gets paid every month for being retired. He isn't producing anything anyone wants. And he doesn't have to work the way we do at school."

Before you can think how to rationalize the Social Security program, the 8-year old proceeds: "And Uncle Tom told me on the farm last summer that he gets paid more for the wheat he doesn't grow than for what he actually sows and combines and trucks to the elevator. Why can't they take some money out of that soil bank and pay us for going to school?"

Without trying to explain the whys and wherefores of farm price supports and "parity," you suggest to the lad that he goes to school to develop his skills and productive abilities so that he can be more useful to himself and to society.

"Sure, I know," he says, "like our government does for poor countries. But the government gives them money and things to help them develop. Why don't we get paid so we can develop faster in school?"

Embarrassing Questions-

Isn't it amazing — and a bit embarrassing — the way these youngsters put 2 and 2 together? After all, by what logic shall we deny the compensation claims of the school child lobby when all other pressure groups are getting their shares of something for nothing? If we really believe we can print money fast enough to spend ourselves rich, then why shouldn't nonproductive school children as well as unemployed, disabled, and retired adults be given free tickets to the spending spree? If a baby boom is really a key to prosperity through consumption, as is so widely proclaimed, then why not provide these youngsters with checkbooks on Uncle Sam just as soon as they've learned to sign their names? Why not exploit the

fact that the youngsters under 15 outnumber the current combined total of unemployed and Social Security claimants by three to one? The spending possibilities are phenomenal!

Let's face it, fellow parents of America. We're responsible, through active participation or passive neglect, for some fairly foolish ideas in this land of ours. Having steeped our grownup lives in these flagrant socialistic practices of robbing productive Peter to pamper parasitic Paul, how are we to cope with Junior's application for a logical expansion of the system?

What Is Our Objective?

What do we have in mind for our youngsters, anyway? What's the sense of teaching them the Golden Rule, that 2 and 2 are 4, that c-a-t spells cat, if the society they'll face is to recognize none but the majoritarian precept that might makes right? Why teach a child to earn a bike through service if he must live with adults who get "their shares" by the ballot-box appropriation of the property of others? Why teach a youth thrift if he's later to be taxed and punished for his savings? If the swift and the strong are to be handicapped in adulthood, why teach children the rules of sportsmanship and clean competition?

What kind of childhood preparation would be in keeping with the pressure-group politics of later life? When and how do we start teaching our youngsters to take advantage of the politically weak or of the wealthy minority so they'll be ready with clear conscience for old-age retirement at society's expense?

The Eternal Truths

You find these thoughts revolting, of course, because you are teaching and will continue to teach your child the homely but eternal virtues of honesty, thrift, love, cleanliness, Godliness, kindness, hard work, fair play, self-reliance, and respect for all that is good and noble and true in others. From *his* toys, *his* pets, *his* books, *his* things, you hope he may learn something of the values and responsibilities of ownership, use, and control that are inherent in the private property concept. Your role as mediator in childish squabbles is to explain why friendly cooperation is far superior to fisticuffs and similarly aggressive ways of getting and defending what is wanted. Thus he may learn to earn through his own creative efforts rather than steal or seize what he would have from others.

You explore with him the marvels of the natural universe, the heavens, the earth, the endless

variety, individuality, wonder, and beauty of all things, large and small. In searching the encyclopedia and library for appropriate answers to his serious questions, you hope to introduce him to the recorded wisdom of the ages.

Yes, these are some of the basic and eternal truths that any loving parent will teach his own child as diligently and effectively as he can. But can and will we be able to continue teaching such basic truths if more and more of the responsibility for education is delegated to the State, which is bound to teach that government control is desirable? Let us not forget that we teach by what we practice as well as by what we preach. Children are perhaps more prone to do as we do than to do as we say. And if we live by a double standard, they are likely to follow our example.

Time for Self-Appraisal

Perhaps it's time to re-examine some of these adult behaviors of ours that we can't explain to our children and wouldn't condone for a moment if the youngsters were to adopt them. Who would ever think of offering a youngster \$1.00 an hour for shoveling the walks if it snowed and 50 cents an hour "unemployment compensation" if it didn't snow? A child can't be made to understand such a deal by

any of the sophisticated "reasoning" adults have offered as justification for doing it themselves — can't understand how no shoveling can be worth half as much as snow shoveling — how anyone can better himself by spending 50 cents for nothing instead of saving it for something.

It's quite impossible to explain to a child that the way to build up a "social security fund" for himself is to stuff in his piggy bank a signed receipt every time he takes and spends one of the coins. The deficit-financed path to prosperity is thoroughly incomprehensible to children. After one or two trials, they won't even play marbles on terms of "loser takes all."

Nor can a hungry child understand that the way to get the most satisfaction out of two cookies is to toss one in the garbage can, or some other "soil bank," and eat the other. Have you ever tried to explain to a youthful operator of a lemonade stand the profitability of dumping every second glassful down the drain instead of selling it — and then trying to collect the difference from those people who didn't want lemonade anyway?

I sometimes wonder how many of the things I do in a day, or fail to do, wouldn't make sense to my son. And if I can't explain such actions or failures to him — and

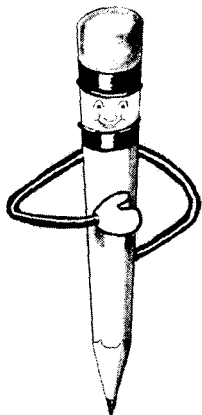
wouldn't approve if he similarly behaved — then why do I persist in these things?

Our Own Business First

We expect the teachers in our schools to exemplify in their own lives the principles they teach. Have we not at least an equal responsibility as parents to bring our adult behavior into conformity with the way in which we'd have the child develop? Think how much more time we'd have for our children — our own family — if we'd simply discontinue our well-intended but uninvited meddling in other people's affairs. It would amaze most of us to see how much better the neighbors get along without our benevolent butting in to their business. The general problems of the unemployed, the aged, the farmers, the underprivileged would disappear as if by magic if we could only confine ourselves to correcting our own instead of all the other fellow's mistakes. And such behavior then could be explained, even to a child.

No, son, you're not entitled to payment from others for the time devoted to your own enlightenment and improvement. But you do have my respect and gratitude for calling attention to a much neglected phase of my own education.

• • •



I, PENCIL

My Family Tree as told to
LEONARD E. READ

I AM A LEAD PENCIL — the ordinary wooden pencil familiar to all boys and girls and adults who can read and write.¹

Writing is both my vocation and my avocation; that's all I do.

You may wonder why I should write a genealogy. Well, to begin with, my story is interesting. And, next, I am a mystery — more so than a tree or a sunset or even a flash of lightning. But, sadly, I am taken for granted by those who use me, as if I were a mere incident and without background. This supercilious attitude relegates me to the level of the commonplace. This is a species of the grievous error in which mankind cannot too long persist without peril. For, as a wise man observed, "We are perishing for

want of wonder, not for want of wonders."²

I, Pencil, simple though I appear to be, merit your wonder and awe, a claim I shall attempt to prove. In fact, if you can understand me — no, that's too much to ask of anyone — if you can become aware of the miraculousness which I symbolize, you can help save the freedom mankind is so unhappily losing. I have a profound lesson to teach. And I can teach this lesson better than can an automobile or an airplane or a mechanical dishwasher because — well, because I am seemingly so simple.

Simple? Yet, *not a single person on the face of this earth knows how to make me.* This sounds fantastic, doesn't it? Especially when it is realized that there are about one and one-half billion of my kind produced in the U.S.A. each year.

¹My official name is "Mongol 482." My many ingredients are assembled, fabricated, and finished by Eberhard Faber Pencil Company, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

²G. K. Chesterton

Pick me up and look me over. What do you see? Not much meets the eye — there's some wood, lacquer, the printed labeling, graphite lead, a bit of metal, and an eraser.

Innumerable Antecedents

Just as you cannot trace your family tree back very far, so is it impossible for me to name and explain all my antecedents. But I would like to suggest enough of them to impress upon you the richness and complexity of my background.

My family tree begins with what in fact is a tree, a cedar of straight grain that grows in Northern California and Oregon. Now contemplate all the saws and trucks and rope and the countless other gear used in harvesting and carting the cedar logs to the railroad siding. Think of all the persons and the numberless skills that went into their fabrication: the mining of ore, the making of steel and its refinement into saws, axes, motors; the growing of hemp and bringing it through all the stages to heavy and strong rope; the logging camps with their beds and mess halls, the cookery and the raising of all the foods. Why, untold thousands of persons had a hand in every cup of coffee the loggers drink!

The logs are shipped to a mill

in San Leandro, California. Can you imagine the individuals who make flat cars and rails and railroad engines and who construct and install the communication systems incidental thereto? These legions are among my antecedents.

Consider the millwork in San Leandro. The cedar logs are cut into small, pencil-length slats less than one-fourth of an inch in thickness. These are kiln dried and then tinted for the same reason women put rouge on their faces. People prefer that I look pretty, not a pallid white. The slats are waxed and kiln dried again. How many skills went into the making of the tint and the kilns, into supplying the heat, the light and power, the belts, motors, and all the other things a mill requires? Sweepers in the mill among my ancestors? Yes, and included are the men who poured the concrete for the dam of a Pacific Gas & Electric Company hydroplant which supplies the mill's power!

Don't overlook the ancestors present and distant who have a hand in transporting sixty carloads of slats across the nation from California to Wilkes-Barre!

Complicated Machinery

Once in the pencil factory — \$4,-000,000 in machinery and building, all capital accumulated by

thrifty and saving parents of mine — each slat is given eight grooves by a complex machine, after which another machine lays leads in every other slat, applies glue, and places another slat atop — a lead sandwich, so to speak. Seven brothers and I are mechanically carved from this “wood-clinched” sandwich.

My “lead” itself — it contains no lead at all — is complex. The graphite is mined in Ceylon. Consider these miners and those who make their many tools and the makers of the paper sacks in which the graphite is shipped and those who make the string that ties the sacks and those who put them aboard ships and those who make the ships. Even the lighthouse keepers along the way assisted in my birth — and the harbor pilots.

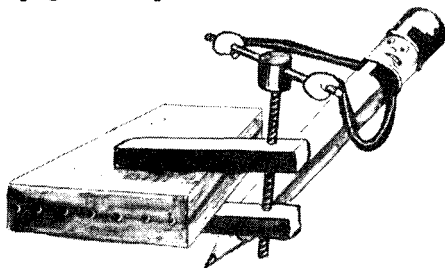
The graphite is mixed with clay from Mississippi in which ammonium hydroxide is used in the refining process. Then wetting agents are added such as sulfonated tallow — animal fats chemically reacted with sulfuric acid. After passing through numerous machines, the mixture finally appears as endless extrusions — as from a sausage grinder — cut to size, dried, and baked for several hours at 1,850 degrees Fahrenheit. To increase their strength and smoothness the leads are then treated with a hot mixture which

includes candelilla wax from Mexico, paraffin wax, and hydrogenated natural fats.

My cedar receives six coats of lacquer. Do you know all of the ingredients of lacquer? Who would think that the growers of castor beans and the refiners of castor oil are a part of it? They are. Why, even the processes by which the lacquer is made a beautiful yellow involves the skills of more persons than one can enumerate!

Observe the labeling. That's a film formed by applying heat to carbon black mixed with resins. How do you make resins and what, pray, is carbon black?

My bit of metal — the ferrule — is brass. Think of all the persons who mine zinc and copper and those who have the skills to make shiny sheet brass from these products of nature. Those black rings on my ferrule are black nickel. What is black nickel and how is it applied? The complete story of why the center of my ferrule has no black nickel on it would take pages to explain.



Then there's my crowning glory, inelegantly referred to in the trade as "the plug," the part man uses to erase the errors he makes with me. An ingredient called "factice" is what does the erasing. It is a rubber-like product made by reacting rape seed oil from the Dutch East Indies with sulfur chloride. Rubber, contrary to the common notion, is only for binding purposes. Then, too, there are numerous vulcanizing and accelerating agents. The pumice comes from Italy; and the pigment which gives "the plug" its color is cadmium sulfide.

No One Knows

Does anyone wish to challenge my earlier assertion that no single person on the face of this earth knows how to make me?

Actually, millions of human beings have had a hand in my creation, no one of whom even knows more than a very few of the others. Now, you may say that I go too far in relating the picker of a coffee berry in far off Brazil and food growers elsewhere to my creation; that this is an extreme position. I shall stand by my claim. There isn't a single person in all these millions, including the president of the pencil company, who contributes more than a tiny, infinitesimal bit of know-how. From the standpoint of know-how the

only difference between the miner of graphite in Ceylon and the logger in Oregon is in the *type* of know-how. Neither the miner nor the logger can be dispensed with, any more than can the chemist at the factory or the worker in the oil field — paraffin being a by-product of petroleum.

Here is an astounding fact: Neither the worker in the oil field nor the chemist nor the digger of graphite or clay nor any who mans or makes the ships or trains or trucks nor the one who runs the machine that does the knurling on my bit of metal nor the president of the company performs his singular task because he wants me. Each one wants me less, perhaps, than does a child in the first grade. Indeed, there are some among this vast multitude who never saw a pencil nor would they know how to use one. Their motivation is other than me. Perhaps it is something like this: Each of these millions sees that he can thus exchange his tiny know-how for the goods and services he needs or wants. I may or may not be among these items.

No Master Mind

There is a fact still more astounding: The absence of a master mind, of anyone dictating or forcibly directing these countless actions which bring me into being.

No trace of such a person can be found. Instead, we find the Invisible Hand at work. This is the mystery to which I earlier referred.

It has been said that "only God can make a tree." Why do we agree with this? Isn't it because we realize that we ourselves could not make one? Indeed, can we even describe a tree? We cannot, except in superficial terms. We can say, for instance, that a certain molecular configuration manifests itself as a tree. But what mind is there among men that could even

record, let alone direct, the constant changes in molecules that transpire in the life span of a tree? Such a feat is utterly unthinkable!

I, Pencil, am a complex combination of miracles: a tree, zinc, copper, graphite, and so on. But to these miracles which manifest themselves in Nature an even more extraordinary miracle has been added: the configuration of creative human energies—millions of tiny know-hows configu-

rating naturally and spontaneously in response to human necessity and desire and *in the absence of any human master-minding!* Since only God can make a tree, I insist that only God could make me. Man can no more direct these millions of know-hows to bring me into

being than he can put molecules together to create a tree.

The above is what I meant when writing, "If you can become aware of the miraculousness which I symbolize, you can help save the freedom mankind is so unhappily losing." For, if one

is aware that these know-hows will naturally, yes, automatically, arrange themselves into creative and productive patterns in response to human necessity and demand—that is, in the absence of governmental or any other coercive master-minding—then one will possess an absolutely essential ingredient for freedom: *a faith in free men.* Freedom is impossible without this faith.

Once government has had a monopoly of a creative activity

THE INVISIBLE HAND

By directing that industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends only his own gain. . . . He is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. . . . By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it.

Adam Smith
The Wealth of Nations

such, for instance, as the delivery of the mails, most individuals will believe that the mails could not be efficiently delivered by men acting freely. And here is the reason: Each one acknowledges that he himself doesn't know how to do all the things incident to mail delivery. He also recognizes that no other individual could do it. These assumptions are correct. No individual possesses enough know-how to perform a nation's mail delivery any more than any individual possesses enough know-how to make a pencil. Now, in the absence of a faith in free men — in the unawareness that millions of tiny know-hows would naturally and miraculously form and co-operate to satisfy this necessity — the individual cannot help but reach the erroneous conclusion that mail can be delivered only by governmental "master-minding."

Testimony Galore

If I, Pencil, were the only item that could offer testimony on what men can accomplish when free to try, then those with little faith would have a fair case. However, there is testimony galore; it's all about us and on every hand. Mail delivery is exceedingly simple when compared, for instance, to the making of an automobile or a calculating machine or a grain combine or a milling machine or

to tens of thousands of other things. Delivery? Why, in this area where men have been left free to try, they deliver the human voice around the world in less than one second; they deliver an event visually and in motion to any person's home when it is happening; they deliver 150 passengers from Seattle to Baltimore in less than four hours; they deliver gas from Texas to one's range or furnace in New York at unbelievably low rates and without subsidy; they deliver each four pounds of oil from the Persian Gulf to our Eastern Seaboard — halfway around the world — for less money than the government charges for delivering a one-ounce letter across the street!

Leave Men Free

The lesson I have to teach is this: *Leave all creative energies uninhibited.* Merely organize society to act in harmony with this lesson. Let society's legal apparatus remove all obstacles the best it can. Permit these creative know-hows freely to flow. Have faith that free men will respond to the Invisible Hand. This faith will be confirmed. I, Pencil, seemingly simple though I am, offer the miracle of my creation as testimony that this is a practical faith, as practical as the sun, the rain, a cedar tree, the good earth. • • •

TURGOT ON UNIONISM

THOMAS J. SHELLY

A reform effort that failed for lack of influential underlying opinion.

THE LABOR UNION SITUATION in the United States today calls to mind the problems that confronted Jacques Turgot when King Louis XVI appointed him Comptroller-General of France in 1774. The arbitrary and burdensome reigns of Louis XIV and Louis XV had left the people deeply discontented.

You and I would doubtlessly agree that personal freedom is the basic social institution, for the reason that the only kind of society worth living in is a free society. We would further agree that a society cannot be free in any real sense unless all of its members have the rights of private property and freedom of contract. This means, of course, that every member of the society has a right to join or to cooperate with others who are willing, as well as the right to refuse to join any group. Sounds sensible, does it not?

The workers in early eighteenth century France, however, did not

have such freedom. As in England and other European countries, they were still under the craft-guild system which began about the twelfth century. I have heard it said that these guilds were like our labor unions, and this is partly true. Guild members were unlike union men, however, in that they were shop owners and employers as well as workers. These guilds were, in fact, monopolies of master workers in each trade or craft, such as shoemakers, bakers, carpenters, weavers, tailors. Each master worker managed a small shop, usually in his own home. He was helped, usually, by several workers to whom he paid daily wages. In addition, he kept two or three boys who were apprenticed to him in order to learn the trade. After the apprentice had completed his period of training, he became a journeyman entitled to daily pay. When he then joined the guild as a master worker, he could open up a shop for himself.

These craft guilds were monopolies because they prevented

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nonmembers from engaging in those particular crafts or trades. They regulated hours of labor, number of apprentices, and the quality and price of the finished goods. In time, many of these guilds became so powerful that they were virtually closed corporations in which the privilege of membership was passed on from father to son. These monopolistic guilds were the cause of much discontent in prerevolutionary France. Turgot, writing in 1776, described them as follows:

"In almost all the towns the exercise of the different arts and trades is concentrated in the hands of a small number of *maitres*, united in corporations, who alone can, to the exclusion of all other citizens, make or sell the articles belonging to their particular industry. Any person who, by inclination or necessity, intends following an art or trade, can only do so by acquiring the *maitrise* (freedom of the corporation) after a probation as long and as vexatious as it is superfluous. By having to satisfy repeated exactions, the money he had so much need of in order to start his trade or open his workshop has been consumed in mere waste.

"Citizens of all classes are deprived of the right to choose the workmen they would employ, and deprived of the advantages they

would enjoy from competition operating towards improvements of manufacture and reduction in price. Often one cannot get done the simplest work without its having to go through the hands of several workmen of different corporations, without enduring the delays, the tricks, and the exactions which the pretensions of the different corporations necessitate or favour, and the caprices of their arbitrary and mercenary government. Thus the effects of these establishments are, in regard to the State, a vast tyranny over trade and industrial work; in regard to a large body of the people, a loss of wages and the means of subsistence; in regard to the inhabitants of towns in general, a slavery to exclusive privileges equivalent to a real monopoly — a monopoly of which those who exercise it against the public are themselves the victims whenever, in their turn, they have need of the articles or the work of any other corporation.

"Among the infinite number of unreasonable regulations, we find in some corporations that all are excluded from them except the sons of *maitres*, or those who marry the widows of *maitres*. Others reject all those whom they call 'strangers,' that is, those born in another town. In many of them for a young man to be married is

*Bettmann Archive***TURGOT'S DISMISSAL**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

enough to exclude him from the apprenticeship, and consequently from the *maitrise*. The spirit of monopoly which has dictated the making of these statutes has been carried out to the excluding of women even from the trades the most suitable to their sex, such as embroidery, which they were forbidden to exercise on their own account.”¹

Turgot Failed

Now, suppose you had lived in France in 1775 and had wanted to work at the shoemaking trade. Accordingly, you applied to the Shoemakers Guild for permission to work at that trade. That “closed corporation” turned you down, however. The master workers who controlled this monopoly were determined to keep you from working at the occupation of your choice. Why? Because your father had not been a shoemaker. He had been only a cobbler! “What arrogance!” you say. That is what Jacques Turgot thought about it, too!

“God, by giving to man wants, and making his recourse to work necessary to supply them, has made the right to work the property of every man, and this property is the first, the most sacred,

the most imprescriptible of all.”²

Accordingly, Turgot undertook to abolish these closed corporations. Immediately, these self-same arrogant monopolists who had denied your right to be a shoemaker took after your friend Turgot and made life miserable for him. You see, they wanted freedom for themselves; but being greedy, they did not want *you* to have freedom. They failed to realize that they would not be able to remain free unless you became free. Otherwise, they might have helped prevent the coming of the French Revolution.

The People Didn't Understand

If I were looking, charitably, for a possible explanation as to why these master workers in the guilds were so unwise as to oppose Turgot's reforms, I might say that the world had changed during the preceding two centuries and that these men remained unaware of the meaning of these changes. This is to say that they were still thinking in terms of Colbertism.

Colbert, you may recall, was King Louis XIV's Finance Minister. He was the champion of mercantilism which influenced the economic and political behavior of nations during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The mercantilists believed that the way

¹Stephens, W. W. *The Life and Writings of Turgot*. New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1895. pp. 129-130.

²*Ibid.*, p. 130.

for a nation to become wealthy was to accumulate as much gold and silver as possible by exporting more goods than were imported. Mercantilism was based upon the theory that a nation could prosper only at the expense of other nations, a theory that led to restrictions of all kinds. For example, the Navigation Laws imposed by the English government on the American colonies produced in part the discontent among the colonists that led to the American Revolution.

Restrictionists Prevail . . .

Just as the mercantilists thought mainly in terms of trade restrictions, so those closed corporations known as craft guilds thought mainly in terms of labor restrictions. Just as the mercantilists were not interested in free exchange, so the craft guilds were not interested in a free market for services. Both, however, should have brought their thinking up-to-date, because, as Adam Smith and Jacques Turgot were telling them in 1776, only freedom of exchange could satisfy the world's increased demand for goods, and only freedom to work at occupations of their own choice could make men happy and contented.

The world had indeed changed considerably since Louis XIV had appointed Colbert as his right-

hand man. The Commercial Revolution — which had its beginnings when Vasco da Gama sailed around the Cape of Good Hope to India in 1498, and when Columbus six years earlier found a new route to “the Indies” by sailing directly westward from Spain — was making the world more prosperous. More and more people were trading, making more and more products available to one another, in spite of mercantilist and guild restrictions. Turgot knew this and understood how much more prosperous France could be if these restrictions were removed. But, he was unable to convey his understanding of the blessings of freedom to the labor and trade monopolists in France in his time.

. . . And Get a Dictator

Unfortunately for France — and for the rest of the world, too — Turgot's reforms in taxation, in the trade monopolies, and in the labor monopolies died in their infancy.

The loud outcries of those who were being shorn of their special privileges by these reforms were frightening to Louis XVI. He lacked the wisdom necessary to give France the potent medicine she so badly needed; so he fired Turgot in 1776, only two years after he had appointed him. The economic disease which Dr. Turgot

might have cured then developed rapidly. Louis XVI and his advisers, in desperation, turned to other doctors, some of whom were "medicine-men." Their ministrations turned what should have been an orderly reformation into a disorderly revolution. The liberty which the revolutionists said they would bring to France was badly abused by these nostrum peddlers, and it disappeared completely when Napoleon Bonaparte took over in 1799. Through their lack of vision, the monopolistic master

workers had brought themselves under a master!

Are conditions in the United States today such that we need the help of a Turgot? Are our federal and state governments too big? Does our tax system need overhauling? Do we have harmful restrictions on trade? Do we have labor monopolies? And would you and I listen to a Turgot if he should try to help us with these problems? Or will we persist in error as did Louis XVI and his advisers in 1776? • • •

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

An Injustice by Any Name

IF THE POOR, for example, because they are more in number, divide among themselves the property of the rich — is this not unjust? No, by heaven (will be the reply), for the supreme authority justly willed it. But if this is not injustice, pray what is? Again, when in the first division all has been taken, and the majority divide anew the property of the minority, is it not evident, if this goes on, that they will ruin the State? Yet surely, virtue is not the ruin of those who possess her, nor is justice destructive of a State; and therefore this law of confiscation clearly cannot be just. If it were, all the acts of a tyrant must of necessity be just; for he only coerces other men by superior power, just as the multitude coerce the rich.

ARISTOTLE, *Politics*

VOLUNTARY UNIONISM

R. C. HOILES

MY ARGUMENTS for voluntary unionism — meaning simply that the right of persons to work shall not be denied or abridged on account of membership or nonmembership in any labor organization — rest on the following reasons or standards:

- that total consumption cannot be greater than total production.

- that you cannot take more out of the refrigerator than you put in.

- that the state or nation cannot indefinitely consume more than is produced. For this reason, total production becomes an important subject. Anything, therefore, that retards production keeps total wages down.

- that all wages must come, in order to be continuous, from production.

- that each man must produce his own wages if we are to have a fair and natural society; that this has always been the case since the Biblical expression that man live by the sweat of his brow.

- that men who believe all men should get what they get by benefiting others produce more than

do those who threaten and are willing to injure others.

- that beliefs that retard production injure everybody.

- that men should not worry about some men having too much wealth, because wealth has to be distributed in order to benefit its owner. If it is reinvested, it furnishes more jobs, and competition keeps prices down. The owners of tools have to bid against each other to get labor. This keeps wages up and competition keeps prices down.

- that in creating wealth under a free enterprise system, the gain of one is the gain of all. It is not like gambling or wars or robbery where one man gains, temporarily, and others lose.

If the above statements are true, then the question is, does the closed union shop tend to reduce production?

Such things as strikes injure the owners of the businesses, their suppliers, and their customers, and, in fact, injure everybody. They even injure the man who strikes in the long run, because if he strikes other people will strike, and this lack of production, these increased costs, are passed back to the union man.

Limiting apprentices also reduces production. Seniority reduces production. Jurisdictional disputes reduce production.

Mr. Hoiles is President of the chain of *Freedom Newspapers* with headquarters at Santa Ana, California. This article is from his editorial column of September 26, 1958.

All these things greatly decrease the accumulation of tools--which are the only things that make increased production possible.

Undoubtedly billions more of wealth would be produced each year if it were not for labor unions interfering with the free and natural division of labor. Labor unions waste about \$750 million a year in dues and fines. These would furnish 50,000 new jobs a year if it takes \$15,000 worth of tools for each job.

Any interference with the free and natural division of labor hurts everyone. If there were complete interference with the division of labor, most everyone would starve to death in a short time.

Under an ideal society all men should get all they produce, and the only way of measuring what each and every man produces is to have jobs interchangeable. Then when one man thinks he is getting less than the true value of his production, he is able to change jobs where he will get all he produces.

If employees are not to be selected on the basis of competition -- the workers who will do the most for the compensation paid -- are they to be selected by noncompetitive rules? By lot? By seniority? By needs of the worker? By rotation? By force or intimidat-

tion? Otherwise, by what measurable, impersonal, eternal rule are they to be selected?

One wonders what impersonal rule, what principles Walter Reuther or George Meany or Harry Bridges or Hoffa or John Lewis use to determine what would be fair wages, since they deny that men should be hired on the competitive, free, and unhampered market basis.

While a right-to-work law would not solve all employee-employer relations problems, it would enable the workers to drop out of the union when the labor bosses put in practice too many things that greatly reduce production and take away from the individual his right to use his conscience.

The free-rider argument is a hollow argument. Time is a factor in every transaction. Undoubtedly a few workers can get a fictitious wage for a short time, but this leads to unemployment and we finally get a labor government which greatly reduces production, so that in the long run even the union man gets lower real wages than he would get with greater production from the competitive, free market system.

It is not the nonunion man who is the free-rider, but it is the union man who gets more than people voluntarily would pay him for his services. • • •

REGINALD JEBB • *The "champions of freedom," who would undermine it for the sake of "social justice," fail to recognize that . . .*

FREEDOM

IS INDIVISIBLE

PERSONAL FREEDOM is endangered not only by the action of those who for their own aggrandizement desire to suppress it in others, but more subtly by well-meaning socialists and others who prefer what they believe to be security to the give and take of a free society. But there is a third danger. It stems from the arguments of those who recognize the supreme need for freedom yet feel somehow that it is incompatible with social justice.

The influence of those who find themselves in this dilemma is particularly dangerous, partly because they give the impression of championing freedom while actually undermining it, and partly because they include in their number men of experience with reputations of high scholarship.

Their arguments may be summarized as follows: First they point out a fact, too often forgotten in this age of collectivist propaganda, that persons are realities,

communities fictions, and from that fact argue that individual freedom is essential to progress, in the sense of movement in a desired direction. But, having established this truth, they proceed to qualify it by saying that if individuals are given freedom, only a few of them get their scope, and the majority are prevented from having a fair chance; and so, in the cause of justice, the freedom of the few must be curbed for the benefit of the many.

That is their premise: a conflict between incompatible desired objectives. They proceed to lay down the lines action should take. If we are to have cooperation between human beings, they say, the price to be paid must be a curtailment of freedom in the fields of politics and economics. In other words, we must allow state interference in these important departments of life if there is to be any progress. They admit that this is an alarming prospect, because to restrict freedom is to stifle man's

Mr. Jebb is a British educator, editor, and journalist.

creative powers, but suggest that if we succeed in abolishing war and privilege the regimentation needed to achieve these two aims will relax when they are achieved. They claim, too, that *all* freedom will not be curtailed. Freedom in art and religious experience will continue even under authoritarian regimes.

Thus we have here an argument that, though freedom is a good and lack of freedom an evil, yet for the sake of cooperation — a constituent of creative activity — we must dispense with freedom in politics and economics, at least for a time, to ensure progress.

Let us take the points one by one, beginning with the premise. This roundly asserts that if you give individuals a free rein, a minority will benefit at the expense of the majority. The first thing to be said about this thesis is that misuse of freedom by selfish people and power seekers is a moral problem. Its solution, so far as the State is concerned — for the State is not competent to teach morals — is to frame laws against those who use their freedom to deprive others of theirs.

But there is a second point to notice. Freedom is perfectly consonant with inequalities of status. To suppose that equality of income or equality of status, even if this were universally possible, is a

substitute for freedom is disproved everywhere by experience. Diogenes in his tub can be as free — and as happy — as Alexander in his palace.

But apart from these flaws, the premise contains a contradiction. Those who stand for freedom would not admit for a moment that a nation had been given its freedom if the majority remained unfree. The premise thus denies the existence of the very thing it postulates as given. So the remedy for the situation is not restriction of a minority's freedom, but insistence on freedom for all. Indeed it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that the two chief duties of a government are: first, to ensure freedom for all, and, second, to prevent weaker members of society from losing it through the action of the strong. To prevent exploitation of man by man is not a curtailment of freedom, but a safeguard of it. What kills personal freedom is the assumption by the State of the power to choose for individuals what they have the right to choose for themselves.

So much then for the premise. The action proposed to minimize the evils of the dilemma it propounds is as faulty as the premise itself.

This consists in a curtailment of freedom in the two fields in

which the State can most effectively operate — politics and economics — and it is argued that, in spite of this curtailment, men will still be free in their religious beliefs and for creative work in art. But will they? What about the communist regime? Marxism is essentially a political-economic invasion of freedom; but no one could say that, under it, a man is free to worship as his conscience bids him or to develop his artistic faculties unhampered by state interference. No; deprivation of one form of freedom leads on to complete subjection to the dominating power. So to allow our political and economic freedom to be taken from us is the first step to outright slavery.

But why should freedom be relinquished? In order, the argument goes, to abolish war and privilege; and when this is accomplished, the regimentation needed to achieve these two aims will relax.

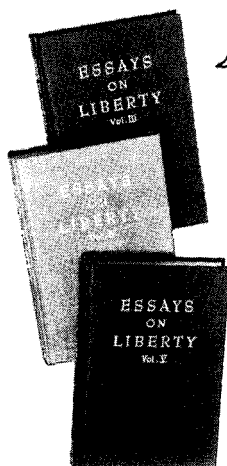
In the first place what evidence is there that State usurpation of our political and economic freedom would have the beneficial results claimed? Only a madman would say that the war spirit and privilege have disappeared in Russia where the State has complete control. Then, second, why should we suppose that state control, once achieved, would voluntarily

relax as soon as certain objectives had been gained?

Experience teaches us that the opposite is true. Every advance that the State makes in control over individuals becomes a jumping off ground for further controls. It would be hard to find a single instance of relinquishment of power by the State, except as the result of popular pressure. Tyranny does not voluntarily commit suicide. This is especially true when control masquerades in paternalistic forms, as in the Welfare State. The difficulty of a return to freedom in those circumstances is increased by the gradual loss of a sense of freedom among the people. They swallow the bait of paternalism and ask for more. This gives the government an excuse for tightening its grip.

The view outlined above is by no means uncommon and is supported by influential people. Those who have freedom at heart should beware of it, for many to whom it is presented will be persuaded by its appearance of impartiality. They will see in it a simple escape from the problem of man's inhumanity to man, not realizing that moral problems cannot be solved by state intervention — least of all by an intervention that deprives a man of his power of choice.

• • •



A New Birth of FREEDOM

IN PURSUING some studies into the background of William Graham Sumner, I have become more and more convinced that America, no less than Great Britain, was undone in the eighteen eighties. Though the philosophy of individualism was still riding high in terms of action, it had already begun to disappear inside the minds of so-called intellectuals.

Those were the years in which the Social Gospel movement, led by the Reverend Washington Gladden, was first turning the Protestant ministry away from the parable of the talents and toward the idea that the State was the proper keeper of the individual's conscience. It was in 1888 that Edward Bellamy published his utopian romance, *Looking Backward* – and as we “look backward on *Looking Backward*” (to use a phrase from Henry Hazlitt) we can see how the idea of industrial slavery under a “planning” technocracy got its first coat of deceptively beguiling paint. In the

eighties Henry Demarest Lloyd, financial editor of the *Chicago Tribune*, began his attacks on “the competitive economy of John Stuart Mill” while the academic economists, deserting the path laid out for them by Francis Amasa Walker, commenced to think in terms of an “institutionalism” that included government control of all lesser institutions.

Finally, though Sumner had hardly completed his own transition from economist to sociologist, his own conception of “sociology” as an objective study of the behavior of peoples had already been undermined by Lester

F. Ward. It was Ward, the so-called "American Aristotle," whose *Dynamic Sociology* (1883) committed the fledgling "science" of sociology to the thesis that mankind is destined to be ruled by a "sociocracy" dominated by the "collective mind." Even before individualism had been properly studied, Ward concluded that it was dead.

Everything since the eighteen eighties has gone Gladden's way, Bellamy's way, Lloyd's way, and Ward's way. In other words, it is mind that counts: what the intellectuals were saying in the eighties determined the Welfare State "action" of the nineteen thirties and after. It is not "materialism" that shapes history; it is the spirit that shapes the mold into which the "material" is squeezed.

Whether this presages the complete subordination of our grandchildren to a "planning" elite depends entirely on what our intellectuals are saying today. Certainly a good case can be made out that collectivism is still riding as high in the "spiritual" world as it is in the "material" actuality of the cradle-to-grave Security State.

As I read the books and periodicals of our time, however, I detect a distinct sense of ennui in the proponents of collectivism. Self-doubt causes some of them to become shrill; in others, the canker of doubt leads to a preoccupation,

not with basic ideas, but with the mechanics of end-product political maneuvering. Instead of trying to save the world with a Grand Idea, the doubting collectivist intellectual tries to save a particular political party, or a particular congressional law, or a particular organization of a university department.

As the London *Economist* has put it, the danger is not that socialism will survive as a living force; it is that it will hang on as a zombie, keeping the world from a necessary reconstruction of the free way of life.

A Change in the Making

That the zombie will go, however, I do not doubt. One of the reasons for my faith is to be found in the sort of thinking that has gone into the three new volumes of *Essays on Liberty* (Vols. III, IV, and V, Foundation for Economic Education, \$3.00 per volume in cloth, \$2.00 paperbound). Taken from FEE publications (from *Ideas on Liberty*, *The Freeman*, and from separate releases), the essays retain a freshness, a sincerity, a keenness of edge, that one looks for in vain in the publications of the collectivist Left.

The authors assembled in these volumes are not, in the ordinary sense of the term, crusaders; they prefer to let others engage in the

journalism of personal combat. Nevertheless, they represent a resurgence that is bound, in the nature of things, to become contagious in a world of collectivist "action" that brings nothing but frustration and disappointment. Though all prophecy is risky, I am certain these "essayists of liberty" sit where such people as Gladden, Lloyd, Bellamy, and Ward sat in the eighties, the creators of the world that is to be.

In the eighteen eighties the collectivist thinkers had an advantage: their panaceas hadn't been tried within living memory. Only the long-sighted historian knew how bad they were. Today the shoe is on the other foot: voluntarism itself, which has never had a thorough chance to work its benefits, looks infinitely more promising than the reality of a state action that has resulted in a rotting dollar, in a constantly growing tax load, and in a steadily increasing atmosphere of coercion and intimidation. The advocates of freedom are no longer arguing against utopia; they are arguing against an existing order that is unable to deliver on its promises. The difference is important.

Moral Basis for Freedom

The three new volumes of *Essays on Liberty* fall easily into two big categories. Simply because

economists do not ordinarily discuss the moral bases of freedom, the most effective of the categories is that devoted to the spiritual choices that underlie contrasting economic systems.

Try Francis E. Mahaffy's "A Clergyman's Security" (from Volume IV), or Edmund Opitz's "Two Points of View" (same volume), or George Winder's "Administrative Law in Great Britain" (Volume V), or Frank Chodorov's "Source of Rights" (Volume III), and see what they do to clarify your general economic attitude. These essays bring home the fact that compulsion is bad not only because it acts as a drag on production; it is bad because it cuts clean athwart spiritual laws that make for responsible and honest human beings. Our present Social Security system is bad not only because it is an actuarial monstrosity; it is bad because it rests on the employment in politics of the principle of common theft. Things go wrong in economics not so much for technical reasons as for moral aberrations that result in the flouting of the imperatives that were first set forth in the Ten Commandments. It is as simple as that.

The second big category of essays in these volumes applies the morality of freedom to the realm of technical analysis. In a bril-

liant phrase Frank Chodorov refers to tariffs as a means of imposing a "self-blockade." Murray Rothbard observes that, where private business tries to solve its problems by increasing its services to the consumer, government is invariably driven to cheat on its treatment of the public (as when the Post Office cuts its mail deliveries to one a day). Dr. Rothbard sets up the ninepins for Leonard Read's arresting "Let Anyone Deliver Mail." Various contributors make an equally sound case for private education. Where Francis Mahaffy tells the reader that state-enforced Social Security is morally defective, Paul Poirot explains why it is economically self-defeating.

Fables Enforced by Facts

One of the most effective devices used by the contributors to *Essays on Liberty* is whimsy. F. A. Harper's "The Graduated Gadinkus Tax" (see Volume IV) makes its point by way of a most pleasurable bit of fantasy. In making use of the whimsical fable Dr. Harper touches hands across a full century with Frederic Bastiat, whose own delightful fables ("The Candlemakers' Petition," "Robinson Crusoe and Free Trade") are reprinted in Volume V.

To balance the whimsy, there is Ludwig von Mises' magisterial

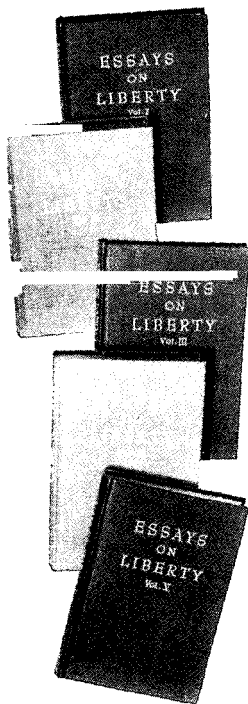
"Facts about the Industrial Revolution" (Volume IV), a scathing manipulation of chapter and verse which leaves the standard economic "historians" of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries without any legs to stand on. As Dr. Mises says, the Industrial Revolution got its first great impetus by selling cotton shirts to the masses at prices they could afford. The rich, meanwhile, went on buying silks. Though laissez faire capitalism obviously brought impressive relief to millions of previously ill-clothed inhabitants of Europe and Asia, Frederick Engels and Karl Marx insisted on describing the vast outpouring of cheap textiles at low prices as "exploitation." Thus the pioneer Leftist adventure in Doublethink and Doubletalk.

Volume V of the *Essays* reprints "The Sources of Invention," by John Jewkes, a study which will ultimately cause the rewriting of every economic textbook in use in America.

Libertarian Methodology

The philosophy behind the Foundation for Economic Education is set forth by indirection in several of Leonard Read's own contributions to the three volumes under review. Mr. Read does not grab you by the lapel to make his points; he talks about the virtues

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of waiting, of taking thought about one's own understanding of principles before preaching to others. This is not the only way of making the case for freedom, but it is a sound way. Where satire often repels by wounding, and where direct commentary on the personalities of politicians, labor leaders, and publicists tends to harden the lines of combat, Mr. Read's approach always permits his ideological "enemies" to reconsider their own positions without Losing Face. This method of seeking converts works with the subtlety of a camphor ball. By changing the atmosphere of discussion, it often succeeds in changing the nature of the discussion itself. It allows principle to be discussed as principle, not utilized as a mere "weapon" in a combat. • • •

The Famous Five

By Holmes Alexander. New York: The Bookmailer, 1958. 208 pp. \$3.50.

THE 84th Congress looked at the decor of the Senate Reception Room and found it wanting: there were five gaping spaces on the walls which called for filling in. So, the Senate set up a committee to select from its many departed members those five whose claim to fame entitled their portraits to grace those walls. On April 30,

1957, this committee reported its selections: Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, Daniel Webster, Robert M. La Follette, Sr., and Robert A. Taft. This event prompted Mr. Holmes Alexander, a writer of some repute, to do a book, consisting of longish profiles of these former senators. It is called *The Famous Five*.

Biography is always interesting — because people are most interested in people — and this one is particularly so because the author confined himself to the highlights of each subject's career, omitting the trivia which a full length biography usually contains. The author makes the reading pleasant with his easy, idiomatic style; only occasionally and inoffensively does he make value judgments, and never does he take recourse to the Freudianisms which belabor many modern biographies. The time spent on reading this book is well rewarded.

What Is Fame?

When you are finished, though, you find a question lurking back in your mind: what makes a man famous? Or, what specific trait or accomplishment does a man have to have to achieve fame? The five characters treated in this book seem to be dissimilar in all respects — as to idiosyncrasies, as to background, as to intellectual

equipment, as to the parts they played in their senatorial careers. And yet, they all achieved fame.

Of all the five, Clay is the only one who could be called affable; he was loved even by his enemies, and it was this quality that made it possible for him to effect legislative compromises even on issues that seemed irreconcilable. On the other hand, his contemporaries, Webster and Calhoun, became famous despite their lack of affability; Webster was haughty and austere, Calhoun was puritanically dour. Webster was first, last, and all the time an orator, using this gift unsparingly and effectively to promote the enhancement of federal power at the expense of the states; Calhoun, while not tongue-tied, depended more on scholarship and logic to support his states rights position. Though they were opposites in practically every respect, they were famous in their time and have remained so during the years.

La Follette acquired the accolade by methods which none of the others used, or did so sparingly; he was the soapbox type of orator, appealing to passion rather than reason, stirring up class hatred, attacking his political enemies without regard to the amenities, making unpopular causes popular by the intensity of his presentation. Taft, again, was quite the

opposite of La Follette, pursuing a course which can be called, loosely, conservative; he was ever the lawyer, the constitutionalist, the student. The point is that despite their dissimilarities these five achieved fame.

All Men of Integrity

The author ascribes the distinction they acquired to a trait not frequently found in a politician, integrity. To be sure, each one in his over-all career held to a basic philosophy of government. Yet each one, as a practitioner of the "art of the possible," was not above making concessions to what he did not believe in if in so doing he thought he could further his own cause. Clay, a protectionist, voted for lower tariffs as a concession to the South. Calhoun saw nothing inconsistent in his advocacy of a federal program of canal and road building and his advocacy of states rights. Webster was against slavery; but he insisted with twisted logic that it was obligatory upon the North to

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return runaway slaves to their owners. La Follette made a career out of attacking political machines and bosses; yet he built in Wisconsin one of the country's most powerful machines, of which he was the undisputed boss. Taft, generally a decentralizer, supported federal aid to education and federal housing. That is to say, all were politicians, not philosophers, and therefore inconsistent.

In one respect all five had something in common, as indicated, though not emphasized, in this charming book. They all came into the political arena equipped with a strong desire for fame. True, Taft was at first rather reticent, but this deficiency was overcome by the prodding of an ambitious and brilliant wife, and he easily

overcame his instinct for privacy. Politics offers no profit quite as alluring as the adulation of one's peers or the applause of the multitude, and this is the stuff of which fame is made. The common hunger for fame of these five is shown by their common ambition: to become President of the United States. Why? Few, if any, of the Presidents who served during their times are as well remembered as are these senators, and one surmises that the fame they acquired in the Senate chamber might have been dimmed in the Chief Executive's office. But, ambition does not stop to reason.

You won't find out in this book what fame consists of, or what makes a person famous, but you will enjoy the reading of it.

FRANK CHODOROV

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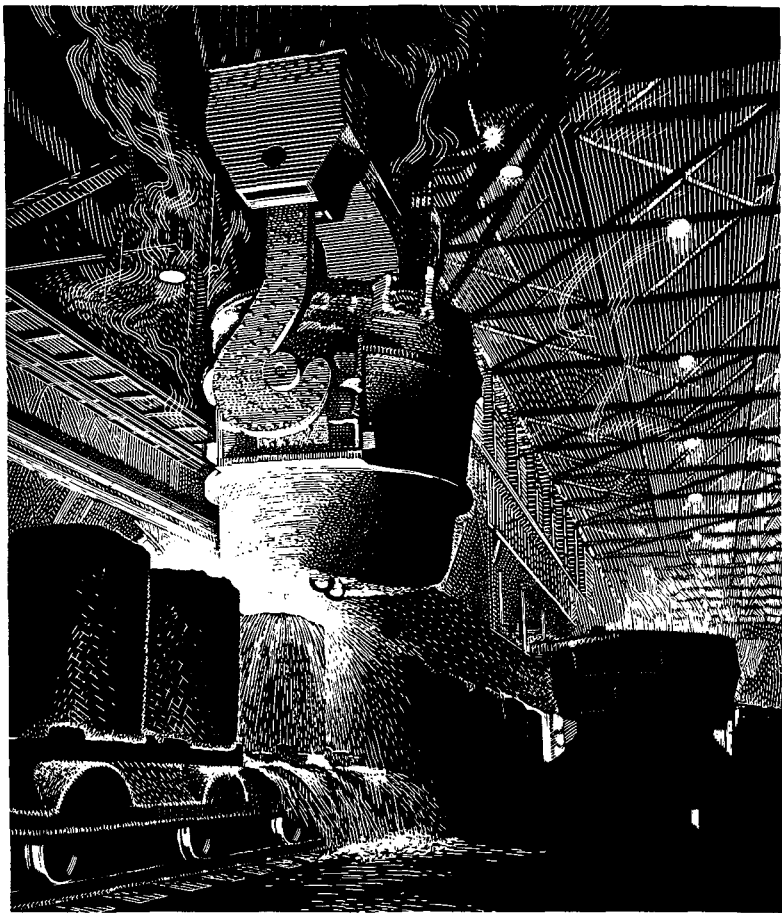
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